

1 STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS  
2 DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND TRAINING

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5 PUBLIC HEARING IN RE:

6 WORKFORCE OFFICE OF GREATER RHODE ISLAND'S  
7 TWO-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR TITLE I OF THE  
8 WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT OF 1998 AND THE  
9 WAGNER-PEYSER ACT

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13 DATE: MAY 25, 2005  
14 TIME: 10:30 A.M.  
15 PLACE: RI DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & TRAINING  
16 1511 PONTIAC AVENUE  
17 BUILDING 73  
18 1ST FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM  
19 CRANSTON, RHODE ISLAND

20

21 APPEARANCES:

22 SANDRA POWELL, ACTING ADMINISTRATOR, STATE WORKFORCE  
23 INVESTMENT OFFICE  
24 JOHN O'HARE, ASSISTANT COORDINATOR, WORKFORCE  
INVESTMENT OFFICE, DOT

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30 RHODE ISLAND COURT REPORTING  
31 25 SEA VIEW AVENUE  
32 EAST PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02915  
33 401/437-3366

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1 WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2005, 10:36 A.M.

2 MS. POWELL: We're starting the Public  
3 Hearing on the Two-Year Strategic Plan for Title  
4 I of the Workforce Investment Act and the  
5 Wagner-Peyser Act.

6 My name is Sandra Powell. I'm here  
7 representing the Workforce Investment Act  
8 Liaison Director Adelita Orefice, who is the  
9 appointed liaison by the Governor of the State  
10 of Rhode Island. I'm here on her behalf. I am  
11 again Sandra Powell and I am the Acting  
12 Administrator in the Workforce Investment Office  
13 in the Department of Labor & Training.

14 I just want to take a moment and talk  
15 a little bit about the Workforce Investment Act  
16 and the Wagner-Peyser Act. The Workforce  
17 Investment Act commenced in the year 2000. It  
18 was a replacement of the former Job Training  
19 Partnership Act, and its purpose is to provide  
20 employment and training services to adults,  
21 youth and dislocated workers.

22 The Act is carried out in Rhode Island  
23 through two local workforce investment areas,  
24 Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island

1           and Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston.  
2           The Act provides services to -- Title I of the  
3           Act provides services to three distinct  
4           populations; adults, youth and dislocated  
5           workers.

6                       For this hearing, we are going to  
7           accept both oral and written comments. Those  
8           comments will be incorporated in the record that  
9           will become part of the two-year strategic plan,  
10          and those comments will be forwarded on to the  
11          U.S. Department of Labor.

12                      Where possible, we will address those  
13          comments in the plan prior to submittal, and the  
14          submission date of the plan is 5/31/05. We will  
15          continue to accept written comments after this  
16          hearing through noon on 5/31/05, in case anyone  
17          does not have the opportunity to provide oral or  
18          written comments at this hearing. Again, this  
19          is a public hearing. It's not a public meeting,  
20          therefore, all comments will be accepted and  
21          taken under advisement.

22                      And with that, I would like to open up  
23          the hearing. Okay, I see that we have one  
24          commenter, which is good. I would like to ask

1           anybody who is here today to comment to  
2           introduce themselves and the organization which  
3           they are here representing, and I know we have  
4           one name on the list or two. I'm going to open  
5           up the floor to Linda.

6                       MS. KATZ: Thank you. My name is  
7           Linda Katz. I am the policy director at The  
8           Poverty Institute at Rhode Island College School  
9           of Social Work, and I would just like to say I  
10          will be submitting written comments. I just  
11          received a copy of the plan yesterday, so my  
12          comments today will be from a brief review of  
13          looking at the plan, and I appreciate the  
14          opportunity that we can submit more detailed  
15          written comments.

16                      MS. POWELL: Sure.

17                      MS. KATZ: There are two points that I  
18          would just make today. The first is that while  
19          there is reference in the plan to adult literacy  
20          and the progress that the governor and state  
21          have made around strengthening the adult  
22          education system, there are a number of places  
23          in the plan where I think that reference to the  
24          adult education system as an integral part of

1 the workforce development system should be  
2 referenced, and I can spell those out in the  
3 written comments.

4 But I think it's really important as  
5 we look to this two-year plan, to be very clear  
6 about the fact that workforce development in  
7 Rhode Island includes a full spectrum of both  
8 worker needs from adult basic education and  
9 people who need ESOL services through training  
10 and post-secondary education. And it feels, in  
11 reading the plan, that there is still this  
12 bifurcation between the workforce development  
13 system and the adult education system and that  
14 we need to do a better job in showing how those  
15 are integrated in this workforce development  
16 proposal.

17 That issue sort of relates also to the  
18 issue of the workforce -- the statewide  
19 Workforce Investment Board. And I understand  
20 things are in flux on this issue right now, but  
21 the proposal to have a representative from the  
22 Department of Higher Education participate on  
23 the State Workforce Investment Board is good,  
24 but I believe that needs to be expanded to have

1           on the Workforce Investment Board  
2           representatives from the Rhode Island Department  
3           of Education so that the adult education  
4           perspective is represented there, as well as  
5           representatives from Corrections or from the  
6           Department of Human Services, since they are two  
7           organizations that provide workforce services to  
8           needy populations and that having on the  
9           statewide web representatives from each of the  
10          agencies that both deliver workforce services  
11          and particularly those that serve target  
12          populations. Having their voice at the table  
13          should be important.

14                     Another way to do that is to  
15          strengthen the ties between the Workforce  
16          Investment Board and the Interagency  
17          Coordinating Council, and the council is  
18          referenced in the proposal but it's not  
19          integrated with the proposal requesting the  
20          waiver on the Workforce Investment Board.

21                     The final point would be more  
22          specifics in the plan regarding how workforce  
23          services will be provided at the One-Stops for  
24          adults with a need for adult basic education and

1 English as a second language and particularly  
2 referencing how the Department of Labor &  
3 Training will coordinate with the Department of  
4 Human Services in providing workforce services  
5 to parents who are on the cash assistance  
6 program and to those who are transitioning off  
7 of it and will not be receiving workforce  
8 services through DHS.

9 Again, I think we continue to have  
10 these silos of DHS is serving the fit  
11 population, DLT serves the non-fit population,  
12 you know, the Department of Corrections is  
13 serving the prison population, and we need to  
14 have much more of an integrated approach in our  
15 workforce development plan and on the ground in  
16 terms of delivery of services and coordination  
17 of services, and I would like to see some of  
18 that reflected in the plan so we can hold  
19 ourselves accountable for meeting those goals.

20 MS. POWELL: Thank you.

21 MS. KATZ: So those are the general  
22 themes in looking at the plan, and I will submit  
23 written comments and try to identify where in  
24 the plan I think some of those themes can be

1 represented in those particular areas.

2 MS. POWELL: Thank you.

3 MS. KATZ: Thank you.

4 MS. POWELL: Thank you very much,  
5 Linda.

6 MS. KATZ: One other theme is along  
7 the lines of collaboration, both in the rapid  
8 response section of the plan and just in terms  
9 of services provided through the One-Stops,  
10 providing information to people who are job  
11 seekers or services that the Department of Human  
12 Services can offer that could be supportive of  
13 workers who are lower income, such as the child  
14 care assistance program, the health insurance  
15 program. Particularly in the rapid response  
16 circumstance of people losing their jobs and  
17 losing their employer-based health coverage,  
18 making sure that we, as part of our plan, assure  
19 that people are given that information about  
20 services that can help support their families  
21 and themselves while they are doing their job  
22 search is, I think, really important.

23 MS. POWELL: And maybe I can add.  
24 Actually, I know that those Rite Care services



1           and Rite Share are actually shared at Rapid  
2           Response. Maybe we need to reference that more  
3           fully in the plan too.

4                   MS. KATZ: Right.

5                   MS. POWELL: Thank you. Thanks again  
6           for coming.

7                   MS. KATZ: Pleasure.

8                   MS. POWELL: We'll look forward to  
9           getting the comments.

10                   (Whereupon, the Public Hearing was  
11           concluded at 12:30 p.m.)

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## 1 C E R T I F I C A T E

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3 I, Diane J. DeStefano, RPR, hereby certify that  
4 the foregoing is a true, accurate and complete  
5 transcript of my notes, taken at the  
6 above-entitled Public Hearing.

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8 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand  
9 this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2005.

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11 DIANE J. DESTEFANO, RPR, NOTARY PUBLIC

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**WIA/Wagner-Peyser 2 Year Plan  
Rhode Island**

**1. Public Comments Submitted by:**

**Diane Cook**

**2. Represents Agency or Organization:**

**Department of Human Services**

**3. Date Submitted:**

**May 31, 2005**

**4. Response:**

Comments were incorporated in plan at Section IX in Paragraph F.

# Employer Service Network (ESN) Members' Agreement



## *In Brief*

**Purpose** – To organize job development and placement activities across public and private entities in Rhode Island for the benefit of all.

**Primary methodology** – To establish lasting relationships with members of the business community that ultimately lead to employment opportunities for the job seekers ESN members collectively represent.

**Outcome** - A win-win-win for the ESN's three customer groups (business people, job seekers, job development professionals).

## **ESN Protocol at a Glance**

### *The 12 "Traditions" of the ESN*

ESN Members shall:

1. adhere to the underlying principles of the ESN such as customer service, confidentiality, collaboration, and continuous improvement of self and system;
2. actively participate in and sustain the local ESN meetings as the heart of the ESN;
3. facilitate access for one another to employers, services and job orders;
4. maintain successful relationships with their business customers;
5. function as the lead point of contact for their business customers;
6. share/post job leads throughout the ESN within 2 business days if unable to fulfill the business customer's needs from within the member's own agency;
7. utilize the netWORKri common job order form for data collection;
8. expediently follow up employer requests to assure customer satisfaction;
9. assess the needs of the job seeker and the business customer sufficiently well to assure mutual customer satisfaction;

10. maintain the accuracy and currency of the information in the employer account database;
11. represent the ESN while representing the member's own agency;
12. and share professional development opportunities.

**WIA/Wagner-Peyser 2 Year Plan  
Rhode Island**

**1. Public Comments Submitted by:**

**Linda Katz**

**2. Represents Agency or Organization:**

**Poverty Institute, Rhode Island College**

**3. Date Submitted:**

**May 31, 2005, submitted in writing  
Oral comments made at Public Hearing held on  
May 25, 2005. Oral comments contained in  
transcript of hearing.**

**4. Response:**

- **The commenter requests that the RI Department of Education be included on the State Workforce Investment Board as a member.**

The Governor and the State legislature have determined that the State policy board should not include several operational entities of State government that were previously on the Human Resource Investment Council, including the RI Department of Education.

The SWIB waiver request represents the Governor's vision with regard to the inclusion of educational representation on the Board at this time. The Governor has included the Office of Higher Education.

- **The commenter requests stronger emphasis on strengthening the adult education system.**

Reference to Adult education has been added to Section IA under the state's strategic economic development goals. It is further addressed in Section I, Paragraph B. 6 and is listed as one of the Governor's top goals and priorities in Section II.1 entitled "State Workforce Investment Priorities".

- **The commenter requests that the literacy needs of native born Rhode Islanders be addressed in the plan regarding critical workforce issues.**

The State has incorporated these concerns on section IV- I and J.

- **The commenter requests that approval to the Waiver for the State Workforce Investment Board be delayed until the makeup of the Human Resource Investment Council is decided.**

The creation of the State Workforce Investment Board is not contingent upon the membership of the Human Resource Investment Council. Approving the waiver allows important decisions regarding state workforce development issues to be addressed in a timely fashion.

The process to solicit nominations for the Human Resource Investment Council is codified in State Law. The process for the SWIB is identified in the federal Act and Regulations.

As stated above, the Governor and the State legislature have determined that the State policy board should not include several operational entities of State government that were previously on the Human Resource Investment Council. Thus the make up of the Human Resource Investment Council reflects the collaborative vision by the Governor and State legislature. Although this State HRIC legislation might be amended at some future time, it is important that the work of the *State Workforce Investment Board* continue with minimal delays. If such future amendments occur to the HRIC legislation, an additional waiver request could be developed at that time. With the approval of the waiver, the State Workforce Investment Board can perform important policy functions, while being aligned with the legislative membership requirements of the Human Resource Investment Council.

- **The commenter requests clarification regarding the Interagency Council's membership and function.**

The plan has been updated in Section III.C.1 to address these concerns.

- **The commenter requests the expansion of RI Kids Count and Covering Kids and Parents Initiative to there netWORKri sites. In addition, the commenter seeks connections with CBOs that serve limited English proficient Adults and provide literacy services.**

As referenced in Section II, I, paragraph 6 of the plan, strategic planning is underway to streamline and strengthen the netWORKri system. These concerns will be taken under advisement.

**The Poverty Institute  
at R.I. College School of Social Work  
Providence, RI 02908  
456-8512**

**Comments on the Two-Year Strategic Plan for Title I  
Of the Workforce Investment Act  
May 2005**

**A. Strengthen Connection to Adult Basic Education**

While the Strategic Plan acknowledges the need to address the literacy and English language needs of adults and references the Governor-led efforts that have been undertaken to strengthen the adult education system, the Plan fails to integrate adult education as part of the overall workforce development system and strategies.

The specific ways in which the Plan should be modified to include adult education are as follows:

- (1) The RI Department of Education should be included on the Workforce Investment Board. Creating a strong K-12 education system is one of the identified strategic economic goals (Section I A) and adult literacy is referenced as one of the key workforce investment priorities (Section II 1). As the entity responsible for K-12 as well as the adult education system, the RI Department of Education should be a full member of the state-wide WIB to ensure that programs, policies and strategies are coordinated. Including the Office of Higher Education on the WIB to assure coordinated strategies with the community college and institutes of higher education is important but not sufficient.
- (2) It is surprising that the Plan would include “creating a strong educational system (pre-school, as well as K-12) with accountability for performance” (Section IA) as one of seven strategic economic development goals and not include the “strengthening the adult education system” as well. Building an adult education system that is responsive, high-quality, easily-accessed, and that allows adults to transition through learning levels up to community college or job training has been recognized as critical to the state’s ability to meet employers’ needs. This should be included as a goal.
- (3) In the Economic and Labor Market Analysis, the Plan should specify adult basic education and ESOL as “workforce development issues” (IV-I) and as “issues that are prioritized as being most critical to the state’s economic health and growth” (IV-J). While literacy needs of new immigrants are referenced in the latter section, the needs of native-born are not.



**B. Provide Additional Information about the State Board and How it Will Work with State Agencies. A waiver of the requirements of the composition of the WIB should not be granted until the composition of the Human Resources Investment Council is decided.**

The state is pursuing a waiver of the requirements of the WIB membership so that the newly-constituted Human Resources Investment Council (HRIC) can serve as the WIB. The statutorily-mandated HRIC does not now include representatives from state agencies, but the Governor is proposing that the Department of Labor and Training and the Office of Higher Education replace the appointments that would have been made by the senate and house. The Governor has made appointments to the HRIC that have not yet been approved by the senate. It is premature to grant a waiver until the question of the composition of the HRIC is resolved by the Governor and General Assembly. For the reasons outlined above, the RI Department of Education should be represented on the WIB.

The Governor has been making appointments to the HRIC (proposed WIB), but the Plan does not describe, as required, the process used to identify the State board members. (Section III, B, 3). What outreach was done to solicit nominees to serve on the HRIC from the different constituencies, for example?

If the newly-constituted HRIC serves as the WIB, then state agencies (other than DLT and Higher Education) that were previously represented on the WIB will no longer have a seat. In particular, the Department of Human Services which provides employment-readiness services to hundreds of low-income parents will not have a seat on the policy-making body. In addition, agencies responsible for employment services for people with disabilities, prisoners and former offenders, seniors and others will not be represented on the WIB. Yet the Plan does not specifically explain how these agencies will be involved in planning and implementing the workforce investment system. (Section III, B, 2).

The Plan references the Interagency Council, but fails to state which state agencies participate on the Council. It is not clear whether the Interagency Council gives input to the WIB or the WIB directs the policy of the Council. (See Section III, C, 1 and 2). The membership of the Council as outlined during discussion of the Governor's Adult Literacy Taskforce and the working-relationship between the Council and the WIB as described by the Task Force should be specified in the Plan.

**C. Maintain and Expand Partnerships with Community Based Organizations and Increase Capacity to Service People with Barriers to Employment**

The Plan refers to the partnership with RI Kids Count and the Covering Kids and Parents Initiative through which staff help Pawtucket netWORKri customers apply for health insurance coverage. The Covering Kids and Parents staff also help link customers with other supportive services (child care, Food Stamps) for working and job-seeking low income Rhode Islanders. The partnership with the Independent Living Council to provide services to people with disabilities is also described. These types of partnerships

should be expanded to other netWORKri offices so that low-income customers and those with special needs can receive the assistance they need to succeed in the workplace.

Increasing connections with community based organizations that serve people with limited English proficiency and literacy would also strengthen the netWORKri system. Strategies to achieve these connections should be included in the plan.